Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LIMA 01317 151739Z

41

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05

EB-07 SCCT-01 OPR-01 SY-04 /082 W

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P R 142038Z FEB 75 FM AMEMBASSY LIMA TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3945 INFO USCINCSO DIA JCS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PE

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER EXPLAINS DISTURBANCES OF LAST WEEK

1. AT TWO SEPARATE MEETINGS HELD AT FOREIGN MINISTRY ON FEBRUARY 13 AND

TODAY (FEBRUARY 14), FOREIGN MINISTER

DE LA FLOR GAVE AMBASSADORS STATIONED IN LIMA ACCOUNT

OF LAST WEEK'S DISTURBANCES. HE DESCRIBED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUARDIA CIVIL STRIKE EARLY IN THE WEEK, THE
EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE CONFRONTATION, AND THE RIOTING
AND DISTURBANCES WHICH OCCURRED ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY
5 IN THE ABSENCE OF NORMAL POLICE PROTECTION. DE LA
FLOR EMPHASIZED THE ACTIONS OF CERTAIN GROUPS OF
ACTIVISTS QUOTE AND SOME ARMED CIVILIANS UNQUOTE WHO
HE SAID MOVED FROM ONE GUARDIA CIVIL CENTER TO ANOTHER
ENCOURAGING THE STRIKE AND A HARD LINE RESPONSE
TO THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO ENGOTIATE. HE SAID THE
ARMY EVENTUALLY HAD TO RESORT TO FORCE WHEN SUCH ACTIVITTS
RESPONDED TO GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATORS WITH MACHINE GUN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LIMA 01317 151739Z

FIRE AND TEAR GAS.

- 2. DE LA FLOR DESCRIBED AT LENGTH THE RUMORS SURROUNDING THE EVENTS AND ATTRIBUTED MOST OF THEM TO AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION. HE PLACED THE VARIOUS REPORTS OF FROM 40 TO 400 GUARDIA CIVIL DEAD IN THIS CATEGORY STATING FLATLY THAT ONLY SEVEN GUARDIA CIVIL MEMBERS WERE INJURED (ONE CIRTICALLY) AND NONE RPT NONE KILLED. HE SAID THA TOTAL DEAD IN THE EFFORT TO STOP THE LOOTERS WAS 66. HE TOOK THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS TO TASK FOR "GROSS EXAGGERA-TIONS" AND INDICATED THAT SUCH SENSATIONAL TREATMENT OF EVENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REFLECTS A CERTAIN ATTITUDE OF SUPERIORITY AND SUPERFICIALITY ON THE PART OF THE PRESS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TOWARD THE SMALLER NATIONS. HE ALSO SAW IN THIS REPORTING A COORDINATED EFFORT TO DENEGRATE THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION AND TO TAR PERU WITH THE BRUSH OF MILITARISM AND AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS. HE SAID "WE ARE NOT AGGRESSIVE BUT ARE REVOLUTIONARIES. WE RESPECT THE IDEOLOGY AND SOVERIGN RIGHTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES AND WISH TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES, BUT WANT THE SAME RESPECT FOR OUR IDEOLOGY AND REVOLUTION IN RETURN". DE LA FLOR SAID THAT PERU'S REVOLUTION WAS NATIONALISTIC, UNIQUE, PERUVIAN AND ORIENTED TOWARD THE PEOPLE AND ADDED THAT PERU WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND ITS REVOLUTION, WHILE WORKING FOR INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION (SUCH AS IN THE ANDEAN PACT) AND ON BEHALF OF GOOD INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GENERALLY. HE ADDED THAT PERU DEISRES AND APPRECIATES THE COOPERATION IT HAS RECEIVED FROM THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.
- 3. DE LA FLOR SAID THAT THE OPPOSITION TO THE REVOLUTION WAS ACTIVE IN THE RIOTING AND RUMOR MONGERING AND HE SAW SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FACT THAT THE CIVIC CENTER WAS DESTROYED JUST AT A TIME WHEN PERU WAS PLANNING TO HOST THE UNIDO MEETING AND A MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. HE ASSURED THE AMBASSADORS PRESENT THAT THE UNIDO MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE ON SCHEDULE, AND GUARANTEED APPROPRIATE FACILITIES AND SECURITY FOR THE DELEGATIONS COMING TO THAT MEETING. DE LA FLOR FIELDED A FEW QUESTIONS AND CLOSED THE MEETING SAYING THAT THE AMBASSADORS WOULD SOON RECEIVE A CIRCULAR CONFIDENTIAL.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LIMA 01317 151739Z

FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY EXPLAINING THE EVENTS IN WRITING AND PRESUMABLY DEALING WITH THE QUESTION OF THE UNIDO MEETING.

4. COMMENT: I WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK PRIVATELY WITH DE LA FLOR AFTER THE MEETING BUT DID SPEAK WITH AMBASSADOR MARCHAND, HEAD OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S POLITICAL DIVISION, WHO SAT AT DE LA FLOR'S SIDE DURING THE PRESENTATION. I

REITERATED TO HIM THE POINTS MADE IN MY DECLARATION OF FEBRUARY 8 REFUTING THE FALSE ALLEGATIONS MADE IN THE PERUVIAN PRESS AND REINFORCED BY PRESS SECRETARY OSCAR FAURA'S STATEMENT CONCERNING POSSIBLE US INVOLVEMENT IN THOSE DISTRUBANCES. MARCHAND ASSURED ME THAT THIS STATEMENT WAS ACCEPTED BY THE GOP AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RPT NO OFFICIAL ALLEGATIONS OF THIS NATURE. I MADE SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRONOUNCEMENT PRESIDENT VEALSCO IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE ON MONDAY AND MARCHAND ASSURED ME THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REFERENCE TO ANY US AGENCY IN THAT SPEECH.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994 Channel Indicators: n/a

Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS, MEETINGS, AMBASSADORS, POLICE FORCES

Control Number: n/a Copy: SINGLE Draft Date: 14 FEB 1975 Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960 Decaption Note: Disposition Action: RELEASED Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975| IMA01317

Document Number: 1975LIMA01317 Document Source: CORE Document Unique ID: 00

Drafter: n/a Enclosure: n/a Executive Order: GS

Errors: N/A

Film Number: D750055-0090, D750056-0180

From: LIMA

Handling Restrictions: n/a

Image Path:

Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750242/aaaablqj.tel Line Count: 126 Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM

Office: ACTION ARA Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL Original Handling Restrictions: n/a Original Previous Classification: n/a Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Page Count: 3

Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a Reference: n/a

Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED Review Authority: GolinoFR

Review Comment: n/a Review Content Flags: Review Date: 04 APR 2003

Review Event:

Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <07 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>

Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JÚL 2006

Review Media Identifier: Review Referrals: n/a Review Release Date: n/a Review Release Event: n/a **Review Transfer Date:** Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a

Secure: OPEN Status: NATIVE

Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER EXPLAINS DISTURBANCES OF LAST WEEK

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, PE, (DE LA FLOR VALLE, MIGUEL), (DE LA FLOR, MIGUEL)
To: STATE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006